

# HANDOUTS:



**RED**

## **BELL PEPPERS**

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **Where did they come from?**

In 1492, Columbus and his explorers discovered sweet and hot peppers in the West Indies. He took samples back to Europe. Peppers quickly became popular in Europe as a food, spice and condiment. Twenty years later in 1512, travelers found bell pepper varieties growing throughout the West Indies, Central America, Mexico, Peru and Chili. Peppers were named by Christopher Columbus and Spanish explorers who were searching for peppercorn plants that produce black pepper.

#### **Where do they grow?**

California and Florida produce most of the sweet bell peppers for the United States. Other states that grow them are Texas, New Jersey and North Carolina. They are also produced in Mexico, Dominican Republic, Belgium and the Netherlands. They are available year round, but are more plentiful and less expensive in the summer.

#### **How do they grow?**

Pepper plants begin from seeds. The seeds grow into a plant about 3 to 4 feet high. Peppers are actually the fruit which form on the plants after it flowers. If green bell peppers are left on the plant long enough, they will mature and turn from green to red. The sugar content increases as a pepper matures. The red pepper therefore, tends to be sweeter than the green. Sweet bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors such as orange, yellow, purple and brown.

#### **Are they healthy?**

🖐 Great source of vitamin C

🖐 Contain three times as much vitamin C as the green pepper

#### **How do you pick a good one?**

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 🖐 Firm skin; No wrinkles | 🖐 Fresh, green stem    |
| 🖐 Shiny, bright color    | 🖐 Heavy for their size |

# ☺ FUN FACTS! ☺

## RED BELL PEPPERS

**Did you know...**

- ☺ Did you know a red bell pepper tastes sweet?
- ☺ Did you know that a sweet red pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper?
- ☺ Did you know that sweet bell peppers come in a rainbow of colors? They come in green, red, yellow, purple and even brown.
- ☺ Did you know that by weight, a sweet red bell pepper contains three times as much vitamin C as a citrus fruit such as an orange?  
*One serving, about 5 strips, provides 100 percent of your daily requirement of vitamin C!*
- ☺ Did you know that peppers can get a suntan?  
A suntanned pepper is a green pepper with red spots.

**Remember ...**  
**Include 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day!**



## School Food Service Link.....

Quick Steps to 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day at school...

Listed below are suggestions which you may choose at your own discretion

### RECIPES:

- ✓ Try a new recipe with red peppers ---  
Fresh Tomato Pizza Salad (attached)  
Mexicali Corn USDA #I-12 (substitute red peppers for pimento)  
Marinated Black Bean Salad USDA # E-21
- ✓ Offer pizza with toppings of red and green peppers
- ✓ Offer raw carrots, celery and red pepper strips with low fat dip
- ✓ Add cooked red and green peppers to hot sandwiches  
(Examples: Cheesesteak Sandwich with Peppers, Sausage & Pepper Sub)
- ✓ Add red and green diced peppers to potatoes wedges for breakfast or lunch

**Presentation**  
**Meal Appeal ----- Contrast Colors**  
Add Red Peppers to:  
Corn, Pasta Salads, Potato Salad  
& Tossed Salads

### MARKETING:

- ✓ Hang up posters from your "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit  
*Sense-ational Food; Eat Your Colors Every Day/Tuba Player;  
Eat Your Colors Today; Enjoy Fruits & Vegetables!*
- ✓ Advertise and highlight the fruit or vegetable of the month on your menu
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) page 9

**Quality:**  
Choose Firm,  
Bright Colored,  
Heavy Peppers

### PROMOTIONS:

- ✓ Promote a "Sticker Day" with prizes on featured fruit/vegetable menu day  
Give this menu a special name (*Example: Power Up with Peppers!*)
- ✓ Feature "Red Day" on the day that you offer red peppers on your menu
  - ✓ Encourage the entire school to get involved
  - ✓ Reward students with a small prize if they are wearing red
- ✓ Turn your salad bar into a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar once/week or once/month
  - ✓ Select produce in season
  - ✓ Utilize commodity frozen and canned fruits and vegetables and dried fruits
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) pages 16-31

**Safety:**  
Wash Produce  
Before Use!

## **School Food Service Link.....**



**School Food Service**



### **FRESH TOMATO PIZZA SALAD**

Yield: 100 each 1 cup portions

1 serving = 1 ounce protein &  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup vegetable

#### **Ingredients:**

Tomatoes, Fresh	17 pounds
Iceberg Lettuce, Chunked	13 pounds
Green & Red Bell Peppers, Diced	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds
Mozzarella Cheese, Shredded	5 pounds
Pepperoni, Sliced	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds
Ripe Olives	1 pound
Italian Dressing (Low Fat), Prepared	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
Croutons, Garlic, Seasoned or Cheese	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds

#### **Directions:**

1-Use ripe tomatoes held at room temperature. Core tomatoes; Cut into one-inch chunks.

2-Place tomatoes in large bowl with lettuce, peppers, cheese, pepperoni & olives.

3-Immediately before serving, toss salad with dressing.

4-Toss croutons with salad or top individual salad cups or offer "help yourself" style croutons.